

**Fallen heroes evoke
messages of faith,
tribute and support**



**Risk outweighed by
benefit to humanity:
“Find it... fix it... and
press on.” (R. Bridges)**

NASA family responds to fallen Columbia and crew

At a briefing to KSC employees yesterday, Center Director Roy Bridges shared these thoughts:

“[They are] seven heroes we regarded as our KSC family members. Today as we pause from our tasks, let us reflect and remember, let us count the many blessings . . . in the honor we have had knowing and working with these astronauts in our joint effort to explore space.

“Let us each take comfort in this thought, that we each had the freedom to choose to work in the space program... that we each regard it as a special privilege to be a member of this team of like-minded people... that we do it in a spirit of awe and wonder and joy for the benefit of all on this planet.

“We are a people who live to explore. We count the risk and we still choose to do it because the results are worth it.

“This is the best team on this planet and don’t you ever forget that... We must avoid ever losing faith in each other. We should not feel guilty about the feeling of exhilaration on[the expected] return of the crew of Columbia. Remember them by getting on with the mission to explore space.”

NASA Administrator Sean O’Keefe:

“They dedicated their lives to pushing scientific challenges for all of us here on Earth. They dedicated themselves to that objective and did it with a happy heart, willingly and with great enthusiasm. The loss of this valued crew is something we will never be able to get over. We have assured the families that we will do everything, everything we can possibly do to guarantee that we work our way through this horrific tragedy. We trust the prayers of the Nation will be with them and with their families.’

The families of the fallen astronauts:

“On Jan. 16, we saw our loved ones launch into a brilliant, cloud-free sky. Their hearts were full of enthusiasm, pride in country, faith in their God, and a willingness to accept risk in the pursuit of knowledge --- knowledge that might improve the quality of life for all mankind. Columbia’s 16-day mission of scientific discovery was a great success, cut short by mere minutes ---- yet it will live on forever in our memories. We want to thank the NASA family and people from around the world for their incredible outpouring of love and support. Although we grieve deeply, as do the families of Apollo 1 and Challenger before us, the bold exploration of space must go on.”

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◆ E-mail – Anita.Barrett-1@ksc.nasa.gov ◆ Telephone – 867-2815

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